

Testimony - AB 766
Government Operations
Wednesday, February 25, 1998
10:00 A.M. - Room 415 Northwest

Name: John C. Cumicek

Address: 933 Fulton Street
Seymour, Wisconsin 54165

Date of Birth: July 27, 1943 (54 years old)

Marital Status: Married to Adrienne M. Cumicek

Family: Daughter - 26 - married/1 daughter
Son - 22 - student - St. Norbert
Son - 20 - student - St. Norbert
Daughter - 18 - student - St. Norbert

Occupation: Executive Vice-President
Evergreen Bank, N.A., Seymour, Wisconsin

President
Outagamie County Fair Association
Seymour, Wisconsin

Government Service: Wisconsin State Director
Selective Service System
Since July 27, 1989

Prior Selective Service Experience
Reserve Force Officer From 12/69 - 4/88

Selective Service System

- a. National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
Gil Coranado, Director
- b. Three National Regions
 1. Great Lakes, Illinois
 2. Atlanta, Georgia
 3. Denver, Colorado
- c. National Budget - \$24.3 million
 1. Less than the cost of a jet airplane
 2. Least expensive insurance policy the country has
- d. Wisconsin - ten area offices - 39 local boards
 1. Rice Lake - 3 local boards
 2. Wausau - 3 local boards
 3. Green Bay - 4 local boards

4. Eau Claire - 3 local boards
5. Racine - 2 local boards
6. Menasha - 4 local boards
7. La Crosse - 3 local boards
8. Madison - 6 local boards
9. Milwaukee - 7 local boards
10. Waukesha - 4 local boards

$$\overline{39} \times 5 = 195$$

- e. Each Local Board Consists of Five Members
 1. Appointed by the Director for the President
 2. Recommendation of Governor
Work with Delora Newton, Governor's Office
 3. Initial Training - 1½ days
 4. ½ Day Annual Training
- f. Two District Appeal Boards - Five Members Each
 1. Eastern District
 2. Western District
- g. Administration - Two Wisconsin Reserve Units
 1. Madison - National Guard, 5 Reserve Force Officers
 2. Milwaukee - All Service, 7 Reserve Force Officers

Selective Service Act

- a. Each male must register within 30 days of turning eighteen (18)
- b. Name, address, date of birth, social security number and telephone number needed for registration
- c. Register at post office and schools
- d. Penalties for not registering
Fine of up to \$250,000, Imprisoned up to 5 years, or both

Compliance Rates: November 30, 1997

a. 18 Year Olds - Year of Birth: 1979

	Est. Pop.	Act. Registr.	Est. Shtfl.	Est. Comp.
National	1,634,280	1,089,350	544,939	66.6%
Region I (19 states)	587,769	404,939	182,830	68.89%
Wisconsin	33,809	25,754	8,055	76.17%
Region 2	542,660	352,368	190,292	64.93%
Region 3	503,860	330,167	173,693	65.53%

b. 19 Year Olds - Year of Birth: 1978

	Est. Pop.	Act. Registr.	Est. Shtfl.	Est. Comp.
National	1,874,285	1,559,117	315,168	83.18%
Region I (19 states)	680,306	570,996	109,310	83.93%
Wisconsin	38,380	33,187	5,193	86.47%
Region 2	626,809	505,962	121,847	80.56%
Region 3	567,170	479,547	87,623	84.55%

c. Compliance in the Past Has Been Over 90%

d. Reasons for Non-Compliance

1. Less Money for Publicity Activities
2. Time Elapsed Since Last Cold War

Federal Legislation Requiring Registration

- a. Federal Student Financial Aid
- b. Job Training Partnership
- c. Immigration
- d. Federal Job Applications
- e. FBI and U.S. District Attorney Verify When Researching
- f. Military Recruiters Need for New Enlistee's Applications

Twenty-one States Have Passed Legislation

- a. Eligibility for State-Funded Higher Education Benefits
- b. State Jobs
- c. Other Provision
Eligible to Enter Institutions of Higher Learning



LUTHERAN OFFICE FOR PUBLIC POLICY IN WISCONSIN

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

*Hearing on Assembly Bill 766, "Restrictions on Issuing Operator's Licenses, State
Employment and Student Financial Assistance"*

Wednesday, February 25, 1998, 10:00 a.m.

415 Northwest, State Capitol

Dear Rep. Dobyms and Committee Members,

Thank you for accepting testimony on A.B. 766, restricting state employment, student financial assistance and driver's operating licenses based on failure to register with the selective service system. I am Rev. Sue Moline Larson, director of the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin, the legislative advocacy voice of the six synods with congregations in Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the largest Lutheran church body in the U.S.

This bill is surprising in several ways: first, there is already a \$25,000 fine and a possible prison sentence for non-registration with the selective service for young men at the time of their eighteenth birthdays. My son pointed out the full-page notice to that effect in his most recent high school senior class newsletter. That reminder, plus the ones that come directly to our home, has been sufficient incentive for our sons to return the postcard required of them with their personal signatures. I am puzzled why this very punitive piece of legislation has been introduced to institute such harsh measures for forgetfulness or non-compliance. As my husband pointed out, the social security system already has students in its databank, and personal registration seems an antiquated and outdated mode of contact since other methods would be more efficient.

My hunch is that the incentive for this legislative proposal lies in the attempt to ensure that every eighteen year old male be forced to comply with the future possibility of a war-time draft, considering the current saber-rattling taking place in relation to weapons inspections in Iraq. There is an extensive history in this country and in Europe

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concerning conscription, and those of us who are of the generation to have had family members serve in World War II and Viet Nam well remember the more recent struggles around the issue. The ELCA has discussed forced conscription as recently as 1995, when in national churchwide assembly it adopted the social statement, "For Peace in God's World," by a nearly unanimous vote. Bishop Jon Enslin, of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, whose office is in Madison, was a contributing member to the research and study team for the statement.

The statement makes the following assertions: "We begin with a strong presumption against all war; support for and participation in a war to restore peace is a tragic concession to a sinful world." "With its ministry of Word and Sacrament, the Church sustains believers in their conscientious decisions, including people who serve in the military and defense industries, and people who refuse to participate in all wars or in a particular war." "We also affirm that governments should vigorously pursue less coercive measures over more coercive ones: consent over compulsion,..." "For the sake of a greater good or for reasons of conscience, citizens may need to oppose a prevailing understanding or practice of national identity and interest."

A strong emphasis in the Wisconsin Assembly, championed by Rep. Schneider, a co-sponsor of this bill, is the protection of one's privacy and personal identity in the form of driver's license or social security number from use or theft. For a young person just entering adulthood, it is more critical to establish a personal belief system, than to protect an identifying number that can be misappropriated and wrongly used. The willingness to consider military service is a key part of a young man's identity, and it should not be abused or coerced by threats of loss of access to employment or educational assistance. This is blackmail. It is surprising in light of the nature of our nation, which enshrines individual choice, and appoints government to be the protector of personal rights and freedoms.

Lutheran ethics has always ruled out blind obedience to authority. In this century, such compliance enhanced the egregious acts of Nazi Germany, and aided the most despicable and destructive racism the human mind can imagine. How far would the authors of this bill be willing to go to enforce compliance with the selective service

system? During World War I, resisters were imprisoned; only a belated declaration by President Roosevelt in 1933 freed them. Do we want to treat our high school graduates, who may be thoughtful and reflective about the meaning of military conscription, to waste their talents and years sitting in over-crowded prisons with true felons, because of their personal values and decisions?

There are many aspects to the issue of registration which need to be addressed in a more comprehensive, holistic way. As long ago as the Civil War, as an older man, my great-great-grandfather paid the mandatory \$300 fee to avoid service in the Army of the North, which he, unlike many others, was able to afford. I have a niece who received an appointment to a military academy. In the event of another large-scale conflict, will not young women as well as young men be subject to registration? This bill addresses only males, which is short-sighted in view of societal values which attempt to enforce some measure of gender equity.

With down-sizing of the federal military forces, there is an increased participation in civilian military structures in state guard units. And with the debilitated infrastructure of many cities, Indian reservations, and local schools, why should there not be a program of national service which each youth would be asked to provide, involving a system of self-selection - some young people in the armed forces and others in civilian conservation corps type efforts? My husband spent his childhood becoming a skilled swimmer in a small-town WPA pool, which is still in use. My family spent summer reunions in a state park landscaped and developed as a WPA project. Why should young people only be taught to value training involving war? There are a limitless options for asking for patriotic service as a valid expectation for every legal resident. The possibilities of what this might entail for the development of discipline, skills, and values is exciting, and provides an encouraging alternative as a benefit for both individuals and the nation.

In the meantime, the Church will continue to call upon its members to study peace. It will continue the discussion about whether Christian love and discipleship prohibit participation in war in all or any circumstances. And in its continued opposition

to violence it will remain committed to faithful constraints in a broken and complex world.

I can see no useful purpose for this bill. As committee members, please oppose it and instead use your authority to protect the right to constructive dissent which is based on individual values and faith. Thank you.